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Training Day at the IQA

An exciting and helpful day for all providers of the IQA Diploma in Quality organised by the IQA at their headquarters in London. The colleges learnt more about the exciting new developments within the Diploma in Quality. John Davies (Chief Examiner) together with Geoff Vorley (D3 principal examiners) from Quality Management & Training Ltd and the other principal examiners for the 6 modules of the Diploma in Quality, outlined the advantages, benefits and why the demand for such courses have increased and examination results have improved. For more information about the Diploma in Quality, please visit www.iqa.org

New International Qualification Scheme for IT People

According to a recent report, a major new international qualification scheme for people in IT is being launched in the UK by the British Computer Society. The European Certification of Informatics Professionals (EUCIP) has been designed as an independent and international scheme for IT specialists in the same way as the European Computer Driving Licence was developed as a standard test of IT user skills. It will be essential for individuals who want to verify their competencies according to a European standard. There are no formal entry requirements. The syllabus covers IT system planning, building and operation. After achieving the main certificate candidates can gain more advanced

qualifications in other specialist areas such as network administration and software development. EUCIP is an initiative of the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies, of which the BCS is a leading member. For further details, please visit www.bcs.org

IT Service Management

Are you fed up with being left waiting hanging onto the phone, just listening to that muzak again and wanting to talk to a person not a machine. Well maybe help is at hand. The new standard, IT Service Management (BS15000) will help service support companies define, measure their quality of service, monitor and improve their levels of service. So if you have a support department, which is treating your customers in this way, unless you do something about it they will go else where. ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) is the most widely accepted approach to IT Service Management in the world. ITIL provides a set of best practices, drawn from the public and private sectors internationally. It is supported by a comprehensive qualification scheme, accredited training organisations, and implementation and assessment tools. The best-practice processes promoted in ITIL both support and are supported by the British Standards Institution's Standard for IT Service Management (BS15000). QM&T (Quality Management & Training Ltd.) have successfully introduced service management systems which reflect the requirements of BS15000 and URS (United Registrar of Systems) can certificate companies to this new standard.



For more information please visit www.qmt.co.uk

Guidance on Statistical Techniques for ISO9001:2000, ISO/TR 10017:2003

This new technical report has been released by ISO with the aim of helping users of the ISO9000 series to identify and use statistical methods and techniques to improve the effectiveness of the Quality Management System. The new guide replaces ISO/TR 10017:1999 and is aligned with ISO9001:2000, although use of the guide is not a requirement for certification to ISO9001:2000. Lally Marwah, convener of the working group that developed the new standard says "... (the standard) offers a clear and concise view of a range of widely used statistical techniques, and their potential role and value in driving quality improvement". For further information please visit www.iso.ch

Knowledge Management in Construction

PD 7503 an 'Introduction to Knowledge Management in Construction' has been released by BSI and aims to help the UK construction industry to use Knowledge Management efficiently and effectively. David Williams, head of construction market development for BSI says "Relatively few companies operating in the construction sector have fully embraced Knowledge Management. We hope PD 7503 will help to change that, as it offers an introductory guide on how to effectively manage the wealth of knowledge involved in the complete construction process from design to construction, handover and occupation and to ensure it is properly communicated and applied". For further information see www.bsi-km.com

How to Test IT Systems within the Guidelines of Data Protection Act 1998

The BSI has published new guidelines on the use of personal data in system testing. The Financial Services Authority supports the work and Mike Frost of the FSA has said "This is a practical and very useful work of reference for the cost conscious manager, who understands the benefits,

both of legal compliance and systems proven to be efficient by valid and credible system testing. At worst, it removes any excuse not to give full consideration to data protection in system testing procedures. It provides a practical methodology that can save considerable time and effort." The document should help system testers to identify alternatives to using 'live' personal information for system testing. Also, it should ensure that sufficient testing has taken place such that when the system is being used in a real situation it holds personal information securely and within the Data Protection Act. For further information see www.bsi-global/dataprotection

Computers Causing Stress

A recent survey has suggested that computers can damage our health by causing rising stress levels. According to the survey commissioned by security firm Symantec, it has been suggested that four in five computer users get irritated and stressed by PC problems. Anger management experts say stress has to be stopped before it affects productivity and those around us. The survey found that computer viruses, spam and general information pollution annoy men most, whereas women found crashing systems and sluggish performance caused the most stress. The survey of 500 UK adults, conducted by Ipsos Research, found the top 5 stress triggers to be:

- Slow performance and system crashes
- Spam, scams and too much e-mail
- Pop-up ads
- Viruses
- Lost or deleted files

According to the British Association of Anger Management, people should help themselves by taking regular breaks and time out to calm down and breathe deeply to help prevent stress. More than a third of men and women will resort to extreme behaviour when confronted with computer frustration, such as swearing, shouting and even violence. As people work longer hours and become increasingly more reliant on computers and technology to



communicate and do their work, minor irritants can soon snowball into larger problems. Symantec has suggested a number of top tips for dealing with PC pests, before stress levels get out of control:

- Take care of your hard drive - check irregularities in the way your PC stores files and defrag to ensure files are not saved in fragments.
- Remove unnecessary web clutter such as Internet history files, cookies and cache.
- Back up your hard drive on a regular basis.
- Avoid viruses – don't open attachments, unless you know what they are and who they're from.
- Use suitable software such as utility software that can check your hard drive, defrag it and remove clutter. Spam filters and antivirus software, as well as firewalls should be used to keep your personal information private and to avoid hackers.

A recent Health and Safety Executive (HSE) survey of 700 managers said £1.24 billion a year was lost because of stress-related sickness and lost productivity. For more information please see www.theregister.co.uk

Artificial Blood to Save Lives

It has been recently reported that doctors have for the first time successfully used artificial blood to treat eight patients at Stockholm's Karolinska Hospital. With the use of this artificial blood it could lead to dramatic changes in healthcare. A statement from Karolinska Hospital says that this synthetic blood, which is in a powder form, can be mixed with liquid when needed, and used immediately regardless of the patient's blood type. It is made from donated supplies of real blood and can be stored away for years. Normal blood has a shelf-life of just 42 days. The synthetic blood has also shown to transport oxygen through the body better than real blood. It would be used to complement a patient's own blood, not to replace it, as real blood has qualities that the artificial blood lacks. This product

was developed by researchers in the US and the exact process for developing it has been kept a secret. For more information please see BBC news.

The Met Make Chatrooms Safer

The Metropolitan police will be visiting schools in an attempt to make children aware of the dangers of the Internet chatrooms by introducing a new software programme called "Safer Surfing". They will also give children freebies such as mouse mats, pencils and non-permanent tattoos. The software is aimed at ten and 11-year-olds, giving children tips on how to stay safe online and helping them protect themselves from the potential dangers of "chatting" with strangers online. Research shows that five million children aged nine to 16 regularly use chatrooms. The Metropolitan police's latest campaign comes not long after the "most prolific Internet groomer ever caught" was jailed for five years. A former postal worker who used the Net and chatrooms to prey on young girls by pretending to be a teenage boy. For more information please visit www.theregister.co.uk

Safety Standard of London Underground

It has been recently reported that London Underground has been failing to meet engineering safety standards. A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report showed that there were thousands of examples of "substantial non-compliance" – mostly relating the condition of the track. It also highlighted the different levels of track quality inspection, where manual track assessment was not being carried out at the required frequency. Tube chiefs are now considering the frequency of testing in the wake of the derailment at Camden Town station. On 19 October seven people were injured at the north London station, when the rear carriage of a Northern Line train came off the track and hit a wall. This incident came 48 hours after a Piccadilly Line train derailed at Hammersmith, which was believed to be caused by a cracked rail. For more information please see BBC news.



Security of On-Line Banking

According to a recent report, Nationwide Building Society and Halifax have become the latest target for an e-mail scam known as “phishing”. Customers are tricked into revealing security details by being asked to click on a website link and enter account information. Experts say the scam originates from Eastern Europe. Both banks, closed their online facility and will impose additional security measures before they open again. The phishing scam has also hit large retail banks in the US, Australia, New Zealand and mainland Europe in the past year. In fact, it has also targeted Barclays, Lloyds TSB and NatWest bank customers in the past two months. For more information please see BBC news.

SIGMA moves Forward

Not to be confused with Six-Sigma, SIGMA – Sustainability: Integrated Guidelines for Management was launched in 1999 as a partnership between Forum for the Future, BSI and AccountAbility. It is supported by the government and aims to give advice that helps organisations make a contribution to sustainable development. It has recently launched new guidelines that will help organisations to:

- Effectively meet challenges posed by social, environmental and economic dilemmas, threats and opportunities.
- Become architects of a sustainable future

A full copy of the SIGMA Guidelines can be found at www.projectsigma.com

EU Launches Draft Proposals on Chemicals

Chemicals found in many household items will soon be more tightly regulated under plans put forward by the European Commission. Under the draft proposals, which are published on Wednesday 29th October 2003, companies will have to disclose basic data on all the chemicals they produce. Around 30,000 chemicals will undergo tests to prove their safety if the proposals become law in 2005. But some campaigners say the regulations do not go far enough. The new legislation, known as Reach (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) will totally change the way chemicals are controlled. In future chemical companies will have to subject each substance to official screening before it can be licensed for use. At the moment only 10% of chemicals on the market have undergone such stringent tests. The Reach process will identify potentially harmful chemicals, like those that cause cancer or damage genetic material and classify them as “substances of very high concern”. One of the purposes of Reach is to ensure chemicals of very high concern are phased out and replaced with safer alternatives. However, as pressure groups have pointed out, after a substance of very high concern has been identified it will not automatically be banned. Instead the company producing it will have to demonstrate “adequate control” over its circulation. For more information please see BBC news.